

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 518

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE POUCH

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 6507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EAID CG

SUBJ: MOBUTU ATTACKS CRITICISM BUT CONCEDES NECESSITY OF ECONOMIC
AND MILITARY REFORMS

REF: KINSHASA 6226

1. SUMMARY: IN A SPEECH BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
AT ZAIRE'S NATIONAL PARTY INSTITUTE, PRES MOBUTU LASHED OUT AT
CRITICS OF HIS REGIME WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NECESSITY OF ECONOMIC
AND MILITARY REFORMS. IN WHAT WE SEE AS AN EXTREMELY DEFENSIVE
REACTION TO PRESSURES FOR RECONCILIATION WITH SHABA AND POLITICAL
REFORMS, HOWEVER, MOBUTU DOWNPLAYED ZAIRE'S "LUNDA PROBLEM" AND
ASSERTED THAT THE NATION'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES ARE ECONOMIC,
NOT POLITICAL. END SUMMARY.

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2. MOBUTU BEGAN BY REFERRING TO INTERNATIONAL PRESS TREATMENT OF
ZAIRE AS A "UNIQUE CASE OF CONFUSION, DISORGANIZATION, INCOMPETANCE
AND INSTABILITY" "THE SICK MAN OF AFRICA," RIDDLED WITH
CORRUPTION, WHICH NOW MUST BE RECOLONIZED IN ORDER FOR PROGRESS
TO BE POSSIBLE. MOBUTU WENT ON TO CHALLENGE THIS PORTRAYAL IN
AN OFTEN DEFESIVE AND DISORGANIZED FASHION BY DISCUSSING IN TURN

THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES (FAZ), THE NECESSITY OF EXPELLING CUBA FROM THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, ZAIRE'S POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE KOLWEZI INVASION, THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, AND THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS REGIME.

3. MOBUTU DENOUNCED THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS CHARACTERIZATION OF FAZ AS AN AGGRESSOR AGAINST RATHER THAN A DEFENDER OF THE ZAIRIAN PEOPLE. HE RECOUNTED IN DETAIL THE RETAKING OF KOLWEZI AIRPORT BY FAZ WELL BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH LEGIONAIRES, AND STRESSED FAZ'S CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PACIFICATION OF KOLWEZI. HE THEN WENT ON HOWEVER, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THESE POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF FAZ'S PERFORMANCE DID NOT MEAN THAT NO IMPROVEMENT WAS NECESSARY. SUGGESTING THAT "RADICAL AND RIGOROUS THERAPY" MIGHT BE NECESSARY BUT PROVIDING NO DETAILS, MOBUTU STATED HIS INTENTION TO REINFORCE AND STRENGTHEN EACH UNIT OF THE ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING THE POLICE (GENDARMES) AS WELL AS COMBAT TROOPS.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CUBAN ROLE IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, MOBUTU ADDED LITTLE TO THE ZAIRIAN POSITION REPORTED REFTEL. IN PASSING HE REFERRED TO ANGOLA AS THE "ETERNAL AGGRESSOR."

5. TURNING AGAIN TO PRESS CARICATURES OF ZAIRE AS "ETERNALLY INCAPABLE"

MOBUTU CITED SEVERAL POSITIVE ZAIRIAN RESPONSES TO THE KOLWEZI INVASION. HE REPEATED EARLIER CLAIMS THAT EIGHT ZAIRIAN ENGINEERS ARE CURRENTLY ABLE TO RUN MINING INSTALLATIONS WHICH PREVIOUSLY

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REQUIRED THE TALENTS OF 650 EXPATRIATE ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS. HE MENTIONED THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS, WHICH WAS ACTIVE IN KOLWEZI BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPS. HE ALSO INSISTED THAT ZAIRE WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY FEEDING THE AFRICAN TROOPS NOW IN SHABA, STRESSING THAT AN AIRBRIDGE HAS BEEN CREATED TO TRANSPORT FOOD FROM THE KIVU REGION TO SHABA. HE THEN GAVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF HIS THESIS THAT ZAIRE IS UNFAIRLY PORTRAYED ABROAD THE FACT THAT EVEN MINOR DISORDERS HERE RECEIVE HEADLINE ATTENTION. YET ZAIRE DOES NOT SUFFER FROM THE KIDNAPPINGS, AIR PIRACY, BOMBINGS AND OTHER ACTS OF VIOLENCE WHICH ARE SO ABUNDANT IN MANY OF THE WORLD'S CAPITALS. MOBUTU CLAIMED THESE ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE TREATED ROUTINELY WHEN THEY OCCUR ELSEWHERE BUT WOULD BE PRESENTED IN APOCALYPTICAL TERMS WERE THEY TO OCCUR IN ZAIRE.

6. ADDRESSING ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, MOBUTU CLAIMED THAT ALL MEASURES NECESSARY FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN, AND THAT THE CONDITIONS POSED BY ZAIRE'S FRIENDS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVER EFFORT WERE BEING MET TO THE GENERAL SATISFACTION OF ALL CONCERNED. REFERRING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS WHICH CHARACTERIZE ZAIRE'S RECOURSE TO FOREIGN EXPERTS AS AN EXAMPLE OF RECOLONIZATION,

MOBUTU INSTISTED THAT CALLING IN EXPERTS WAS HIS DECISION AND THUS
IN NO WAY IMPLIED INFRINGEMENT OF ZAIRIAN SOVEREIGNTY. HE SPECIFICALLY

MENTIONED IMF EXPERTS AT THE BANK OF ZAIRE, FRENCH INSPECTORS AT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 6507

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, AND BELGIAN OFFICIALS AT CUSTOMS,
AND INDICATED THERE WOULD BE MORE THROUGHOUT THE PUBLIC SECTOR.
HE CHARACTERIZED THE RELIANCE ON EXPATRIATE EXPERTS AS "NORMAL AND
NECESSARY FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT."

7. MOBUTU THAN ONCE AGAIN PLACED ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE
CONTEXT OF A CRISIS-RIDDEN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY. REFERRING TO PRESS
AND OTHER CRITICISM OF THE SIZE OF ZAIRE'S EXTERNAL DEBT, HE
REPEATED HIS CONTENTION THAT ZAIRE' ONLY OWES \$2BILLION, NOT \$3
BILLION AS IS OFTEN STATED, AND THAT THIS AMOUNT IS NOT OUT OF LINE
WITH
ZAIRE'S POTENTIAL DEBT SERVICE CAPABILITY. HE NOTED THAT SOME
OF THE GROWTH IN THE EXTERNAL DEBT HAD BEEN BEYOND ZAIRE'S CONTROL,
POINTING IN PARTICULAR TO THE COST INCREASE IN THE INGA-SHABA
TRANSMISSION LINE AND THE MALUKU STEEL MILL. MOBUTU ALSO
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ARGUED THAT OTHER NATIONS OBLIGED TO SEEK FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AFTER THE PETROLEUM PRICE HIKE OF THE EARLY 70'S HAVE NOT BEEN CRITICIZED AS SEVERELY AS ZAIRE. HE CONCLUDED FROM THIS THAT ZAIRE'S CRITICS ARE MOTIVATED BY RACISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM.

8. MOBUTU'S LIST OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDED THE CREATION OF AIR ZAIRE, THE CONSTRUCTION OR IMPROVEMENT OF AIRPORTS AROUND THE COUNTRY, A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF GENERATORS PROVIDING ELECTRICITY TO ZAIRIAN TOWNS, CREATION OF A NEURO-PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN KINSHASA, AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE MALUKU STEELMILL, THE INGA DAM, AND THE KINSHASA INTERNATIONAL FAIR-GROUNDS (FIKIN), AFTER A REVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION BOTTLENECKS AND LOW COPPER PRICES WHICH HAVE AGGRAVATED ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

MOBUTU MENTIONED THE ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PURCHASING WHAT IS NOW GECAMINES FROM BELGIAN INTERESTS AND SETTING ASIDE \$90 MILLION IN CONNECTION WITH THE LONDON BANK AGREEMENT. HE AGAIN REJECTED THE CHARACTERIZATION OF HIS REGIME AS INCAPABLE AND CORRUPT, BUT THEN WENT ON TO STATE HIS FIRM INTENTION TO CHANGE COMPLETELY ZAIRE'S STYLE OF MANAGEMENT.

9. THE ALTERNATION BETWEEN ANGRY DENUNCIATION OF HIS CRITICS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REGIME SHORTCOMINGS WHICH RAN THROUGH THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC PORTIONS OF HIS SPEECH WAS NOTABLY ABSENT FROM THE CONCLUDING POLITICAL SECTION. CLAIMING THAT ALL OF ZAIRE'S RESOURCES BELONG WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION TO ALL ZAIRIAN CITIZENS, MOBUTU INSISTED THAT ZAIRE HAS NO PROBLEM WITH THE LUNDA, A SMALL MINORITY OF WHOM HAS BEEN MANIPULATED BY THE RUSSO-CUBAN COALITION. ZAIRE'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS ARE ECONOMIC, NOT POLITICAL: THE MPR (THE REGIME'S SINGLE PARTY) HAS SUCCEEDED IN MARRYING DISCIPLINE AND LIBERTY, AND IS THUS NOT A BARRIER TO THE FREE SPEECH OF LEGISLATORS WHEN THEY RE GATHERED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. "IT IS THUS," SAID MOBUTU, "THAT WE INTENDED TO SAFEGUARD HUMAN

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RIGHTS IN ZAIRE." HE CONCLUDED WITH THE ASSERTION THAT IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO PROVE THAT DEMOCRACY IS EXERCISED IN ZAIRE.

10. COMMENT: MOBUTU CLEARLY HAS BEEN STUNG BY THE CURRENTLY ABUNDANT CRITICISM OF HIS REGIME. ALTHOUGH HE REFERRED EXCLUSIVELY (AND FREQUENTLY) TO UNFAIR PRESS TREATMENT, HE PRESUMABLY WAS RESPONDING TO DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES AS WELL. HIS DEFENSE OF EXPATRIATE ADVISORS AND HIS RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REFORMS ARE ENCOURAGING; HIS HARD LINE ON POLITICAL MATTERS IS NOT. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A MORE FLEXIBLE

STANCE ON POLITICAL REFORM ONCE MOBUTU FEELS HE CAN ACT WITHOUT
APPEARING TO BE RESPONDING TO OUTSIDE PRESSURES.
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